

# Proverbs 29:22-24

February 11, 2024

Last week we talked about how to build a working relationship with God through our fellowship with Christ. Over the last four or five weeks, the book of Proverbs chapter 29 has just kind of lent itself to going in a direction of compiling every week forward progress, if you will, of a relationship with Christ. Last week I gave you two great books that are really definitive books, I think, on the two greatest aspects of our relationship: the Gospel of John, which focuses on our salvation, and I gave you the definitive verse on it last week. Then the book of 1 John, and I also gave you the definitive verse on 1 John, which really focuses on the fellowship that we need to have after salvation. These two books were written by the greatest type of the body of Christ, or the greatest type of Christian that you're ever going to find anywhere in the Bible.

We talked about being God's servant and how we need to develop the attitude of not just serving God as a servant, but seeing God as His Son and understanding our position through that intimate relationship. We talked about the book of Song of Solomon, how important that book is to show you and put that all together for you. God brings us up from a child, and the key word we looked at last week was "delicately," how God develops us as His Son.

I showed you when we started the book of Proverbs that the first seven chapters in Proverbs start out with "my son." It's one of them where it says "my children," but it deals with "my son." He gives instructions before he ever gets into the Proverbs. He gives instructions to his son of what he should look for in a relationship and really what he should get out of the book of Proverbs. Then chapter 8 through chapter 30 are the Proverbs themselves. Of course, we're in chapter 29, and then when you get to the last chapter, Proverbs chapter 31, it all comes together and you see the fruition of all of that in the picture of the virtuous woman. It's an incredible concept.

We talked about last week the foreign aspect of Christianity, the great unknown aspect of Christianity, and that is how to love God biblically, the way God wants us to. On Thursday night, I think it was, Taylor asked a question on the seven things that you lose when you lose your salvation. Obviously, as we went through those, one of those was your ability to love God the way the Bible says you should.

We talked about how in the day and age that we live in, we fall in love with God and then we fall out of love with God when something else better comes along. Instead of taking our time and learning how to love Him, we talked about how in the book of 1 John, everybody teaches that the theme of 1 John is love, but once you study the book, you see 27 times he talks about "knowing." The key to loving God is knowing God.

I've told you many times that when we've talked about the judgment seat of Christ, which is no strange doctrine around here, the Bible says in 1 Corinthians chapter 3 that you build upon that foundation, which is Jesus Christ. That's your salvation. Then the rest of your life, we're supposed to build three good things on that foundation versus the three bad things. Of course, the three good things are gold, silver, and precious stones.

How many times I've told you that once you get saved, then you build on that foundation gold, and gold represents the deity of Christ, and that represents us getting to know Him more every day of our lives, the gold that we build on that foundation. The second one is silver. Silver in the Bible is the price of redemption, and not only should we know Him better as we build on that foundation every day, but also understand the price that He paid for us on Calvary's cross. Then, of course, precious stones, people. I tell people all the time, and I say it and I preach it and I lay it out all the time, that you can't know Him and you cannot understand what He has done for you and not tell somebody else about it.

The reason why we don't, let's just be honest today, the reason why we don't is because, one, we have no gold on the foundation and no silver, so no precious stones. Any real relationship with God will have those three things in it. We tied it in the last couple of weeks of how all of that comes about: getting God's burden and then in time getting God's vision through our building a relationship through our fellowship with Christ. As I said, no burden or no vision without a relationship.

*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

There will be no fellowship, there will be no relationship without the Word of God, walking in the light. That's the Bible as He is in the light. Through that, then you get the burden and then you get the vision that God has for you.

## I. The Reality Check Message

Today, I want to look at our next set of verses, again, tying it into last week and then building a kind of a staircase level to next week. As we go on through here, now we want to look at Proverbs chapter 29, verses 22, 23, and 24.

*22 An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression.*

*23 A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.*

*24 Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul: he heareth cursing, and bewrayeth it not.*

God wanted to see how we would react when we are reproved. The key to getting the vision and the burden was, as we talked back then, changing some things in our lives. Obviously, we do that as we hear the preaching in the Word of God. We see what God has for us, and it has an impact in our life. That really is the determining factor of where we go with God and what we do and what we accomplish: how we respond to Him when He says to us, "This needs to change in your life."

I told you Thursday night and also yesterday in people ministry that messages like this come along every once in a while. I think they're by God's design. The normal garden variety message you get in, you lay out some stuff, and God talks to you and deals with you. But every once in a while, as we Christians work through this relationship with Christ, we all need a reality check. So much goes on around here, so much good stuff, so many fun things we do, so many things

that we look forward to. Sometimes you can lose your vision and your purpose for God in the midst of all the blessings with God. So you've got to have a time-to-time, what I call, a reality check message. Again, there will be some great, solid, practical principles that come out of these three verses.

I want you to understand that first and foremost, there are some things that each of us have to see and understand today that I think are really, really quite invaluable.

## II. Doctrinal and Historical Application

Before we do that, let's get the doctrinally historical put in perspective for you. Doctrinally, all this that I just read will be about obviously the Antichrist, and we have followed him all through our proverb study. He's been identified many, many times. So he would be doctrinally, he's an angry man who stirs up strife. Of course, he comes to power; he sets in motion the biggest war in the history of warfare in the Battle of Armageddon. You'll find that in Revelation 14:20. We talked about the winepress of Almighty God. It's such a great war and such a terrible war that Ezekiel 39:12 says it actually takes them seven months to pick up and bury all of the dead, over 200 million men killed in that, all because this guy is an angry man and he wants to bring about a world power and eliminate.

He's also a furious man. Of course, he's furious against the nation of Israel. Revelation chapter 12 and 13 probably are the two greatest chapters that show his motive and intent against the nation of Israel, and probably all of the Bible in a direct way. You see there that he hates Israel with a passion. He's furious with Israel. That's why when Israel made its two bad choices by the two statements it made back in history, "His blood be upon us and our people," and "We have no king but Caesar," the devil took that and he has absolutely beat them senseless for the next 2,000 years with God's permission because God is using him to judge them.

He hates the nation of Israel for two basic reasons.

1.) Israel, in the millennium when she gets restored, will get the land grant that was given to him back in Genesis 1:1.

2.) The other reason he hates Israel is because, as you see in Revelation 12 and 13, Christ came from the nation of Israel. Christ is the heir to the throne that he thinks is his.

Then the third thing, he's a prideful man. Of course, we see this in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. The humble ones in the verse will be the ones that the Bible says in Matthew 5-10 are the meek in spirit, and that'll be the nation of Israel. The partners here will be the men and the women who take his mark to be with him as he does his work during the Great Tribulation period, the last three and a half years, who, as the Bible says in Revelation 13:18, if you don't take his mark, you can't buy or sell or do anything really. So there will be a lot of people that will go along with him with that and be part of that.

In a historical application, you'll see this all through the Bible. We know that in the Old Testament, there are 18 men who by their lifestyle and what they do and the things that they get involved in will picture the Antichrist, the coming man of sin, who was given to the list many, many times. Guys like Pharaoh, guys like Cicero and Goluchah, judges and Abimelech in Judges,

Haman in the book of Esther, Sennacherib in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles, and of course, Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel. Of course, in the New Testament will be Judas along with the scribes and the Pharisees and the Sadducees. All these would fit into the context of what we're looking at historically today. They all fit that mindset.

### III. Inspirational Application: The Christian Counterfeit

But inspirationally, this will go right along with what we have looked at in the last couple of weeks. Verse 22, we'll start with that.

*Proverbs 29:22*

*An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression.*

I want you to keep in mind last week we talked about basically three things that come into our Christian life. One of them was fellowship, the other one was a relationship. Based on that, the great key for Christianity today would be the word "joy."

*John 15:11*

*These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*

Let's talk about us today. Let's put everything aside. I know we all got our red jerseys on and Mahomes jerseys and everybody else. That's all great. I'm all for it. But for a few moments, we're going to come back tonight and we'll have a great time. But for a few moments, let's put everything out of our mind. Let's just look at us. Don't look at the person next to you. Don't look at the person in front of you, behind you. Just look at yourself. I want this message to be a mirror for every one of us today. I want us to look into that thing and to understand some things. Yes, boys and girls, there will be a test at the end of class this morning. I'm going to give you a test at the end. This was going to be kind of a unique message.

I know that God doesn't care who wins the Super Bowl. I found a news this morning, there was a Methodist preacher who has changed the Lord's Prayer in his church to include the Chiefs winning the Super Bowl in it. He was talking about that how that on the marquee out there, they're into it. He is, they're praying that the Lord, David and Goliath was on the marquee out there. Usually the Chiefs were David and Goliath was San Francisco. I get that, but come on. I guess when you're a Methodist gay preacher, that's all you got. God really doesn't care who wins the Super Bowl. I know the guys out there, they make a touchdown and they want to give God the honor and glory on it. Let me tell you something. I think about your Bible. God doesn't care who makes the touchdown. God didn't give somebody extra special power to reach up there and get that football and make a touchdown. I know that's disheartening to some of you. I get it. But I told you this morning, this is a reality check this morning.

I don't know who's going to win the Chiefs Super Bowl this afternoon. I really don't care. If we get those really neat sandwiches, I'm good. But I will tell you this, and I believe this. You say, "Well, I don't believe that." I don't care if you believe it or not, as long as I believe it. I believe

that they're going to the Super Bowl, even though they may or may not win. It's immaterial to me. They're going to the Super Bowl because of the message that I need to preach today. Because if they went to the Super Bowl, I wouldn't have heard and read what I read this week that correlated right with Proverbs 29 where we're at today, that really, at the end, sets the message on a course that you just can't get away from. If they wouldn't have went, it never would have happened, and I wouldn't have had it, and I'd have had to come up with a three-point outline with a poem or something to make it work.

God does things like that. He really does. Most people don't think that God would change the course of everything in a country just for one person or a group of people for what they needed. That's because you don't see how special you are with God. I'm not saying He does it in every way, shape, or form all the time, but He will.

Verse 22 is a picture, and this is where I want to start. It's a picture of you and me of what we become if we don't build a right relationship with Him. Or, in many cases, we have one, but as we saw again in Psalms 78:41, we go back from it, and then the Bible says that we limit the Holy One of Israel.

Last week I gave you probably one of my favorite verses, and it's my favorite verse because it always smacks me right between the eyes. It isn't one like, "This is the day the Lord has given, let us be glad and rejoice." It ain't anything like that. It simply says,

*1 Corinthians 8:3*

*But if any man love God, the same is known of him.*

That verse is such a powerful verse because, if we could today, can we just cut straight to it? There are certain things that you will have in your life if you really love God. I don't have to answer this, do you love Him this morning? Everybody would say yes, and I think that probably most of you do, but a lot of it is probably in your own mindset of how to love God. Because to really love God, if any man loved God, the same is known of him. There are certain things that you will have in your life, and there are certain things you will not have in your life if you're really loving.

We have a lot of Christian counterfeits. I believe they're saved, many of them, maybe, but they're Christian counterfeits because as Christians, there's a lot of things that we can fake, and a lot of things that we do fake. We pretend with a lot of things as Christians. I've seen it all my life. We learn to say the right things, don't we? Like the servant and the master giving lip service last week. So we learn quickly the system. We learn how to navigate through the things in the Bible and Christianity. We really don't want to change us. We learn how to hang on to our things that we want to keep by pretending that we go through all of these things.

We dress on the outside. There are many churches that if you don't wear a suit and tie, you're not spiritual. If the women don't have lacy, frilly dresses on, you're not spiritual. The truth of the matter is you can look as nice on the outside as you can afford to be, but you can be as black on the inside as the sides of the bottomless pit. People pretend. It's not true in this church, but it's true in many churches I've preached that. The guy who "amens" the loudest usually lives the

least. It's the way it works. I've seen them walk around churches during a preaching service or the song service waving their Bible and screaming and yelling, "Praise the glory to God." A pastor would say to me, "You see that guy, he hasn't been to church for a year."

I'll just tell you right now, this message is going to be one of the least popular that you're going to hear. It's just the way that it is. I will say this, if this message upsets you, there's something wrong with you. It's one of those things because we all need to have a reality check. We all need to look in the mirror today. A message like this doesn't leave any of us any place to hide. We don't like that. I don't like that. But that's a good thing. You'd rather have a message ferret you out wherever you're hiding and God come down and catch you.

A real relationship and fellowship with God is something you cannot fake. I'm sorry. You just can't. Because if any man loved God, there are certain things that you have to have. One of them, the main ingredient, the main witness or the main display to others, will simply be the joy that comes from what we have with Him. Joy is a word that the world has no comprehension of. You can fake almost everything else in Christianity except biblical joy. That's what the world is looking for. They're not looking for you wearing a suit and tie. They're not looking for how beautiful you sing. They're not looking for how big a King James Bible. They live in a cesspool where there's no light, there's no hope. For them to find somebody in this world who truly lives above the circumstances and has the joy, that's what they're looking for. But at the same time, without a doubt, that'll be the missing element or ingredient in Christianity today.

*Revelation 3:17*

*Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:*

That is a state of the body of Christ today. Poor, spiritually bankrupt, wretched, life's a mess, family's a mess, blind, no insight into truth, naked, a judgment seat of Christ that's coming, and miserable, everyday life, a drudgery. Somebody asked my father in the Lord one time, he says, "Mal," he says, "Are you enjoying your salvation or are you enduring your salvation?" His answer was classic. He said, "I'm enjoying my enduring." Are you? But God's people today have absolutely no joy. The great song in the hymnal, "They got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart," is ripped out of the hymnals for them.

I could say this and it would be true that when you lose your Bible, you lose your joy. No question about that. But I also want to tell you, based on my experience with myself and the 50-some years or almost 50 years in the ministry, there's a lot of God's people who have the right Bible, but they have no joy, and they are some of the most negative, angry people that you will ever meet in your life. All my life I've seen them. I've had to endure them. The most mean-spirited, angry, miserable Christians who have absolutely no joy. They will always walk around with a foul, negative attitude about everything.

I've seen young girls, the age of you young girls here in your 20s, 30s, maybe even a little younger than that. I've seen you get to the point in your life where you never really built a relationship. You came to church for the wrong reasons. You wanted a good husband. You want

to get married. You want to have a family. You look around and you want all of those wonderful things, but you just keep looking in the wrong places. In time, because you have no real relationship, you marry Bozo the Clown and you marry somebody that you never should get involved with, or you don't get married and you stay single because nobody really wants the negative spirit in their world that you bring, and you get an attitude about it. When somebody that's your friend gets married, finds a great guy, then you get an attitude about that, and your jealousy of what they have that you think that you want overrides everything about you, and you become one of the most negative people that you'll ever meet in your life. It's all because you won't change about you and build a relationship with God that God will give you the desires of your heart.

I love the young couples that I had the privilege of marrying here, just in the last year. All the great kids that just really, and I watch you kids grow. I watch what God has done in your life. I watch you build a relationship and cement it in concrete with God and His Word that nothing or nobody was going to take that from you, and because you did that, God gave you the desires of your heart and gave you everything you could want in a spouse.

I've seen guys. I've seen them get an attitude with God. I've watched them never really build any relationship in their life or walk away from one that they had, and they are so unfulfilled with themselves, yet they will take it out on everybody else. They'll wind up blaming God and then everybody else for their problems. You talk about the hasty words of last week. The Bible says that a man who speaks words hastily is worse than a fool. In both cases, the young girl or the young guy, I've seen it over the years in so many churches, in leadership. In both cases, they could fix their issue in a heartbeat, in a millisecond, in a fragment of a millisecond. But they never will. Pride. All of their life they become angry, and it turns to bitterness. It becomes a miserable life without any joy. God wrote the Bible to save you, and then after salvation, He wrote these things unto you that your joy may be full.

I've seen it over the years in so many churches in leadership. I would go someplace to preach, and the pastor would pull me aside a couple of days into the meeting, and he'd begin to just pour his heart out how the people of the church, the leadership of the church, were just giving him all kinds of problems. Most times it's the deacons, or somebody who's a finance committee member, or somebody that is a Sunday school teacher, or somebody that's in some kind of leadership position. Years ago, they turned back. If they ever had a relationship with God years ago, they stopped building it, and they stopped moving forward, and they started to let all of the things, and they lost sight of everything that God was doing because they had no real relationship. Maybe they never built one, I don't know. But they never had a real working relationship and never had fellowship that produced any kind of joy. The Bible says, "If any man loved God, the same is known to him." There are some absolute proofs if we love Him this morning.

I grew up in Canton, Ohio. I went to the Canton Baptist Temple. My mom and dad were charter members of that. Harold Henniger built that church about 1947. He started. In early days, it was right across the street from my house, and it moved out on Whipple a number of miles away and became a huge mega church even in the days when I was there. It ran about 3,500 people. I looked back on that, and that was where I really got my eyes open to a lot of things. When you

first get right with God or you first get saved, you're under this illusion that everybody in Christianity is doing what's right. You see it with the nation of Israel. Once they come out of Egypt, God carried them around for a while in a circle until they got their feet on the ground before they had their first battle.

When I got up off my knees that night back in the late 70s or early 70s, if somebody would have told me that the leadership in those churches were corrupt, the deacons were smoking out in the parking lot, that they were doing all kinds of stuff, and nobody had all that negative stuff, I'd have called you a liar because I was in that embryo bubble of a new Christian of just getting right with God that I thought everybody loved God. Boy, did I learn that wasn't true quickly. As I got into the ministry there and I began to work and help my father in the Lord, boy, I began to see that some of the deacons in that church, about 85% of them, were some of the most worthless, godless men you ever met in your life. But they held that power that they thought because they were a deacon or a finance committee member or have some point of power that they could control everything. They had no Bible; most of them didn't even bring a Bible to church. They had no real ministry; they didn't work with anybody. Yet their self-importance was of a magnitude that was unbelievable.

I remember one time we had a youth thing there in the auditorium, probably had 600 or 700 kids. They were teenagers, you know how teenagers are. Fifty kids got saved. Fifty people, kids got saved that night, and after that great revival of kids getting saved, all the deacons could focus on was what a mess everybody left. They didn't give a flip about 50 people being saved. All they were worried about was their little kingdom had been shaken.

When I moved to Kansas City in 1975, I was hired as a youth pastor here in the Kansas City Baptist Temple. Same thing. Except I was a little older then, so I had a little more experience. I had figured a few things out at that time, but again, the deacons were absolutely worthless. They had a large auditorium, and in the back, they had a little room that was called the ushers' room. That's where the ushers kept the offering plates, the communion stuff, and all that. During the preaching services, that's where they'd all head to if they weren't out in the park having a cigarette. Nobody brought a Bible. I don't think in probably 10 or 15 years one of those guys ever sat in the service with his family. They're all out deaconing. They're out running around ministering to poles and chairs and carpet. There wasn't one of them that ever brought a Bible to church. I would go back there sometimes just to see what they were doing during a service. They were laughing. They were telling jokes. They were telling stories. Nobody was focused on the Word of God being preached. The least little thing in all the cases would just set them off, and they'd be furious.

I remember one time years ago they were going to build a gymnasium and add it on to the church. The reason they were doing it was because I had built an athletic program, and some of you were part of that back in the day. I had built an athletic program that was probably running at different times, put them all together, over a thousand people. We were renting a volleyball league and a basketball league and then also a softball league. But we were renting a gym, and it was so hard to find a gym, and it was really hard to find ball teams, ball fields. John Hill used to, I think he still does, coordinate all the softball. He would find me a field. There were times, we

started playing at 6 o'clock at night. There were times when I'd go out there and sit on that field at 3 o'clock to 6 just to make sure no other team came and got us so we'd have a place to play. They understood that. We rented Nylund Junior High over here in Independence, which I don't even know if it's still there anymore. But we had to get wherever we could get and go.

The best deal we ever had was the armory up here on Ozark Road. The commander there was a woman, and she was a colonel. She got to be, we had to be good friends. She liked me because I was in the army, and when I walked, everybody else goes in there. In fact, one time we went in with a couple other pastors, and he thought he was going to bully her, she threw him out. She told the pastor, "I'll talk to Bob here. I ain't talking to him." When I went in, I just, I knew the world. I knew the lifestyle. She was a colonel. You find a woman who's a colonel, you better give her some respect. Because she doesn't like guys anyhow. That's how she got to be a colonel. I'm just a little insight there for you. So I walked in there, and they said, I asked her, "I could see the colonel." And she, and the aide said, "Yeah, she'll see you in just a minute." So I walked into that one, walked up to the desk, and I said, "Afternoon, Colonel, it's good to see you. Sergeant Alexander, 10th Special Forces, retired, good to see you." And put me like that. I loved it. We got the gymnasium for nothing. She let me have it. Friday night, Saturday night, everything she wanted. We got to be buddies. Because she understood, it was the best deal we had. But after a while, that didn't work out because they have all kinds of drills and stuff up there. But it was wonderful while it lasted.

So they decided they're going to build a gymnasium because I needed one. So they have all these planning sessions. They have all these contractor guys in the church. Everybody, and yes, they're all deacons, and everybody knows, everybody knows exactly better than the other guy what needs to be done. I'm sitting in these meetings, they're a waste of time. Just get me a big square building, put some lines on the floor, put some goals up, get out of my way. That's all I need. I'll take care of it from there. But oh, no, no, no. So they're going through all this and all that. So I'm in all these meetings. The deacons are such power-hungry guys. There was one, no, no, I was going to say there was one in particular. In this case, yeah, he opened his mouth, but they're all this way. We're in a meeting there, and they're asking me what I needed and what I wanted and how I wanted it to go because I got the program. He pipes up and he says, "Well, you know, you know that you're not going to be in charge of this. You know that, you know, you're not going to be able to just say who has that, that we're going to have to have a say and what I don't. You're not going to be in charge of that." Well, that was all I needed to hear. I get up in the meeting and I said, "Hey, up your nose with a rubber hose, pal, then you build whatever you want to build. I'll just stay where I'm at because you're not going to tell me how to run a program when you haven't even been to see the program and now you want to be in charge of it." I left. He came running out afterward. "Oh, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry." I'm the earliest person I ever met in my life. You are right. If you guys want to run it, run it. I'm not going to build a program that's running a thousand people, getting people saved left and right. And then you idiots are going to come in and tell me how to do it. Well, obviously that took care of that problem.

I'm telling you one time, Lauren, you remember this. Remember, we went to the Lord was from Iowa. We came up to your church to do discipleship. And then we went down to the other guy's

church. I will say his name on the air. Remember down there, and he wanted discipleship. This is what we did. Some of you were here today, we're on that trip with me. We take a team in, maybe 15, 20 people, 10 guys, 10 gals. I'd start on Sunday morning, and I'd preach about discipleship, come back Sunday night, lay out the whole philosophy of discipleship. Then the whole church would break down into groups, and you people would take a group of five or six people within the church and you teach them how to disciple. We went from Sunday morning, Sunday night, Monday night, Tuesday night, finished up Wednesday night, and got all the lessons done in that. It was a wonderful thing.

I preached Sunday morning and preached Sunday night. Monday morning the pastor knocked on my door about 10 o'clock in the morning, and he said, "Let's go get some coffee." I said, "Okay, that's great." He said, "We can't finish the discipleship." I said, "Why? One of my people get drunk last night or something, get about a share? What happened? What's going on?" He says, "The deacons don't want it." I said, "What do you mean the deacons don't want it?" He says, "The deacons were really threatened by your people coming up here and trying to teach these people. In fact, one of the deacons said, 'What are we doing with this program? If we get all these people, new people coming to our church, how are we going to control them?'" That was his mindset. So we got booted. I still, that was Monday morning. I had Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and all my people had taken off from work. We just made it into a fun time. We just went sightseeing and saw all those things. Iowa, it's great watching the corn grow. It was crazy. Absolutely crazy.

I'll tell you something. Unbiblical leadership will destroy a church faster than anything on this planet. A deacon has, these guys think they got more power than a pastor. There's only two offices given to the church. One of them is the pastor, the other one is deacon. That's the only two. When you look at the qualifications over there in 1 Timothy chapter 3, they're pretty similar because a deacon's job is not to be in charge of anything. It's the pastor who runs the church. He gets the vision and the burden, and then he translates it to the people that deacons, and the word deacon means "run through the dust." The deacons take the vision with the pastor and help get the job done.

I appreciate, we got to do it. Don't take this in a wrong way. When we get done here, we'll set up for a Bible study. In the Sunday morning, we got to set up for chairs for people to come in, and more people come in, more are in, and we're going to set up for things up there. I get that, but I want you to know something. That's not what a deacon does. Don't take this in a bad way. I love everybody who helps and does everything that we do, and we got to do it. But you can train monkeys to set up chairs. You can't train monkeys to invest your life in somebody else's life with the Bible. That's what we do. It is no matter that we're in charge of inanimate objects. The deacon's job is to find out the pastor's burden and then run with him to get the job done.

Greg McClintock. Greg is my buddy. He lives in Monmouth, Illinois. Greg got saved. I went into Christ a number of years ago, and we were just best friends. He was a prosecuting attorney in Monmouth, Illinois. Later he became a judge. Now he's retired. But I've never saw a guy gravitate to the Word of God like he did. He really, really, really did something with it. After he had, he was in churches all the time. It was hard to find a good church up there, but he was doing

what he could. The last church, last I heard when I talked to him, they were moving down to Florida. But the last time I talked to him, he was in a church, and he was in charge of discipleship. He was teaching people how to teach people the Bible. It was an incredible thing.

For a while, he took a little church down south of Monmouth. You guys remember, we went up there? I took the old Path Boys, and some of you went up, and we had a revival service up there. I don't know what it was, a Bible conference or something. It was a great little church. Now take for a matter of the average age was 106. That church had been there 120 years. And so had some of the people. But they were nice folks. The guys played their hearts out. They did great. They loved them. I preached my heart out. People made all kinds of commitments. But you know what? It went nowhere. I had a guy come up at the end of the last night of the service, tears running down his face, about 85 years old. He hugged me and he said, "I wished I'd heard this sermon 45 years ago." I said, "Well, I'm sorry that you didn't. But let me ask you a question. What are you going to do with it now that you have heard it?" Did nothing with it. We went up there, and it was fun for us. We got to have a lot of fun and got to preach and listen to the guys and minister to the people.

About a year later, I'm talking to Greg on the phone, and he said, "Well," he said, "I don't know how much longer I can do this up here." He says, "It isn't going anywhere." He says, "Last two weeks ago," he says, "we almost had a church split." He said, "I had to do everything I could do to hold it together." I asked him, I said, "Well, what happened?" He says, "Somebody went downstairs in the kitchen and moved all the deacons' coffee cups out of one cabinet and put them over here." Caused a church split.

I'm telling you, soul winning never happens. Them discipling somebody never happened. Prayer group being in charge of it never happened. Working with people in the Bible, no way, but mess with my coffee cup and I'll leave the church. I knew a church one time that split over. They were going to get choir robes for the choir. Aren't you glad we don't have a choir here? Well, first of all, we don't have any room, but we do have a choir. It's you. I've never understood getting a group of people putting them back here to let them sing when it takes away from you singing. But that's another thing. These deacons, they hadn't been in a song service for 40 years. No wonder they lost the word that a joy, joy, joy down in my heart. This church, they had a choir, and they were going to get choir robes, and they couldn't agree over what color, and the church split over the color of the choir robes. That's what I'm talking about.

Hey, listen to me. Get it down. Look in the mirror. Reality check. The ministry is people. It's just that simple. I know it's important to have the aesthetics. I'm not sure what that means, but I think it means all the acoustics that go along that makes it comfortable for you to sit your rear end down in service this morning. Comfortable chairs. There's some churches that have hard pew chairs, and they are hard to sit in. You know why? I want to get these chairs, and they're expensive, but I want you to be comfortable, at least sitting here, so I can make you uncomfortable in other areas of your life. But the ministry is people. If you're not involved at some point in your life as you grow, if you're not involved in the lives of people and touching people's lives with the Word of God, there's something wrong with you.

In the Canton Baptist Temple where I was, in the heyday when I was there, they were probably running 32, 33, 3400 people. A lot of people. Now last time I was back, it was probably 900, maybe a thousand people. That's what happened when I left. Fell apart. They went seven years without a pastor. Seven years without a pastor. Dr. Henniger was still around, but he retired, and they tried to get every guy they could to come in to take that church. Seven years without a pastor. Seven years. You got First Baptist in Raytown. They've been out of pastor now for, I don't know how long, can't get anybody to come in. You would think in both cases, it's a dream church. It's beautiful. It's big. It's spacious. You could look at that and say, "Man, can I do something with this in both cases?" You know what, what he wants it? The good old boys. All it takes is one time to go into a pulpit committee meeting and listen to them want to control you and realize that if you take that church, you're nothing but a hireling. You'll stand up and preach on Sunday morning. You'll never make one decision. Everybody else on the Deacon board will make it. You won't have any choice or say in it. All they're hiring you to do is to get up there and preach. That's why. And they'll never minister to people. Never will.

It's one of those things where you're going to find that these guys have to run the show for 40 years. In some cases, they have been in charge of everything. They're in there. Sometimes they're the biggest bullies. I knew this guy back in the day who, he thought he was, in fact, he was the same guy that brought up about the gymnasium. His thing was when the little bus kids would come in, he'd walk up to him, big burly guy, just a bully. He'd walk up to him, and grab him right here and squeeze him until he almost cried. Then he had to just pretend he was kidding with him. Try to, if he tried, that was 25, 35 years ago. Right after today, you'll get a 9mm between your eyeballs.

How do they get those positions? Not because they're spiritual, not because they work their way up in doing anything with people with a pastor, no, but because in many cases of the money they have. Their status in the community. Oh, we used to love to get judges. We used to love to get committee members or school board members. We used to love to have important people because it gave a prestige to the church to look who we got. Many times it's because they grew up in the church that they think they're entitled to that. Sometimes I've seen them early on that they really did good. But the older they got, the farther they get from a fellowship and relationship with God and the more angry they become.

I want to tell you something. I've watched this thing for almost 50 years. Usually when you have somebody like that, and I don't care what position they're in, I don't care. Normally, when you have somebody like that who quit growing and quit building the relationship, I'm going to tell you this, there's usually something in their life that they were not willing to give up. A holdout. I'm not saying they were rapists, serial rapists, they were murderers. I'm saying something in their life is easy as cigarettes, is easy as alcohol, something that they were not willing to surrender. You see, we think that we can get away with that. The longer you leave it in your life, sooner or later, it's going to raise its ugly head and bite you. They limit the Holy One of Israel. They limit a church. They limit their own lives and their families. They've lost the joy.

Do you know why they'll never change?

*Proverbs 29:23*

*A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.*

That's why. Pride, the number one sin in the Bible when he's equal to 28 and Isaiah 14 that caused the whole mess we're in today. In Job 26:4, the great six questions that probably you're going to get asked is the judgment seat of Christ. Did you ever see the last two? The last two in verse 4, it's 26 says,

*Job 26:4*

*To whom hast thou uttered words? and whose spirit came from thee?*

Spirit of pride, spirit of humbleness. There's no joy in their lives. Just miserable, angry, and everybody can see it because the Bible says, "If any man loved God, the same is known to him." There are some things about legitimately loving God through a right biblical relationship with Him that you just can't hide.

I know dealing with people, there can be issues that will irritate you. Trust me. I know that's true. There will be things in ministry that will rub you the wrong way. I get it. I understand it. I have to deal with them almost every week. Every week somebody will do something stupid. Every week somebody will do this or that in a place of leadership and something will happen. Nobody understands that better than me. I'm just telling you right now. But what I have got with God, my relationship, my fellowship, all that He's given me, my family by my side in ministry, you, the greatest people in the earth, all the time that we get to spend in the Bible together, Sunday morning, Thursday night, people ministry like yesterday, the Bible Institute, all the one-on-one stuff that we get to see what God is doing in so many of your lives with all the new folks that just keep pouring in and coming in. I mean, I'm going to get upset over who moved the coffee cups. Hey, I may have to deal with negative things that get into my head, but I will never, you know what keeps those negative things in my head from ever getting down to my heart? The joy that I've got with the Lord. That's the only thing that will keep it. The joy that you get from a relationship with God will override every negative thing that you have to see and deal with, and at the end of the day, it won't rob you of anything.

People in a negative, angry mode like our text today who do not have a relationship, they are joy robbers. Listen, when your joy is full because of what you have, and add to that when you know that you really don't deserve it. I read over there, "These things write I unto you that your joy be full," when I don't deserve it, when I should be in hell screaming out my lungs. There should be absolutely no room in our life for anything negative of somebody bringing in when you're full of the Lord of joy. Most of God's people today are about four quarts low. The red light on your dashboard is blinking red, and you better check it out because you better add some oil to it, the Holy Spirit of God.

*Proverbs 29:24*

*Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul: he heareth cursing, and bewrayeth it not.*

"Bewrayeth" is an old English word; it means you don't say anything or do anything about it. This is a great verse. The cursing here is not just somebody using God's name in vain and you saying something about it, though that could be true. I remember one time years and years ago when I was back in Ohio, I used to go with my father in the Lord, Mel Sabaka. He would preach a revival, and I would go and lead singing for him, and we'd do those things together. Sometimes at the time there would be guys that would go with us, and one of the guys one time we were going down to Steubenville, Ohio, which is right on the river of West Virginia and Ohio, and it's a rough town. Bill Eakin was a deacon in the church, a good man. We were down there one time, and we stopped, a little truck stop, and we sat there at the table and got some coffee and pie. There were guys over here along the field, they were the rough crowd, trucker guys and all that stuff, and they were just cussing up the store. They were God-damning this and Jesus Christ and this, and they were just going to town laughing.

So we're getting ready to leave, and old Bill Eakin, and Bill Eakin was a tall guy, about six foot eight, maybe ten, a wiry guy, he'd go pretty good. Anyway, he says, "You guys go ahead and get the bill," he said, "I'll meet you outside and be right back." I was sitting there, and I'm thinking, "Okay, what's this guy going to do?" He walked over to these guys, and there must have been about eight or nine or ten of them, and he walks over to them and he says, "Hey guys, how you doing?" And they said, "Hey, how you doing?" He says, "Hey, I heard you talking about a friend of mine just a little bit ago, and I just wanted you to know that he's not the way that you think that he is." And I looked up, and he said, "Whose friend are you talking about?" He said, "Jesus Christ." He says, "He's my best friend, he saved me, and I'm going to heaven because of it, and I heard you guys over here using his name in vain, and I just wanted to come over and tell you that he loves you and he died for you and he would save every one of you today. In fact, I've got some gospel tracks here." Every one of those guys took a gospel track. Not one of them said, "No thank you." He smote them to the ground, you know why? Because he bewrayed them. He wasn't going to let them get away with it.

I had a guy back in the, everybody remember Fred Land from the old days? Fred was, he was off bubble, there's no question about it. But he loved the Lord, and he was the weirdest looking guy I ever saw in my life. It's not a criticism, it's just the truth. You just saw him, you'd say he's the weirdest guy I ever saw in my life. Anyway, about every other week I'd get a call from his boss, and he'd say, "Reverend," and I'd say, "Yeah," he'd say, "This is, I'm so and so's boss," and I said, "Okay." I said, "You need to help me," and I said, "Well, I'll do what I can." I said, "What's going on?" He said, "Well, at lunchtime the guys were playing cards over here, and they got a half hour lunch, and he goes over and kicks over the table and rips the cards out of their hands and just tears them up." He said, "I'm afraid he's going to get hurt." I said, "I don't know what to do. I don't want to fire him because he needed the job. He was kind of handicapped. He needed the job. But," he says, "I just can't deal with it." He's something else, man. You know what? I can talk to that guy all day long. He's going to do whatever he wants to do. It's incredible.

Our context here, if we keep it in the text, will be having an angry, bitter person who is always negative about everything and everybody always talking about it. Cursing in the sense of not cursing using words that take God's name in vain, but cursing something that you don't like. "I

don't like this. I don't like that. Why do we do it this way? We've done this way for 20 years. Why are we changing this? Why did they take my coffee cup from one place and put it there?" That kind of stuff. Somebody holding them accountable. Last week we talked about verse 20, "See a man that is hasty in his words? There is more hope of a fool than for him." The reason why there's more hope for a fool than a guy like this is because this guy should know better if he's saved. He should know better than being like this. But because he put himself in that kind of relationship, or she.

## IV. Seven Things a Right Relationship with God Will Produce

In a relationship with God as His Son, it will produce some things in our lives as we get older. Remember last week, verse 21, that God will bring us to be His Son at length. It may take a while. There's a process that you have to go through. But throughout the longevity of our walk with God, it will produce seven things in our life. Here's your test. This is where you ask yourself these things. I often think of Genesis 5 with Enoch when it says,

*Genesis 5:22*

*And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:*

And Enoch walked with God and was not, for God took him. I know what it's like for 50 years of my life. Can you imagine having fellowship and walking with God for 300 years? Incredible.

1.) The older we get, the sweeter spirit we should get.

Like the song, "The longer I serve Him, the sweeter it grows." This is a simple little thing, but look how profound it is. The Bible's likened to honey. If you're filling your life with a book on a daily basis and you're filled with honey, why are you so sour? You should be like honey. A sweetness to your spirit. A sweetness to your spirit, you'll have more compassion on people. You'll have more patience with people. You'll have more grace and understanding how to use grace and truth in dealing with people. A sweet spirit that people will want to be around, not every time they see you come and say to themselves, "What am I going to get today?" The older we get, the sweeter we should get because of the fact the more honey you get in your life if you're getting it. How simple is that? That either says it either is or it isn't.

2.) The older you get, the more you should see and understand what God has done for you.

Forgetting what God has done for us was Israel's biggest problem in Psalms 77:10-11. They always forgot. We come to the place that as we go, because we lose our relationship with God, we lose that fellowship, and we don't have the joy. All those other things come in, you know what goes out of your life? You forget. You forget the time that you were so desperate and God came through for you. You forget the time that your kids were here and sick or this or that and God came through. You forget the time that you were going through some deep trial trouble in your life and God was there for you. You forget about the fact that you look around and you thank God like so many of you families in this church that your kids are by your side in ministry

in this church working together with you. You forget the fact that you got a spouse, a husband or a wife by your side that is godly and will do what's right with the Word of God.

You look back over the years and you take the joy from the lives that God has allowed you to invest in. I mean, you get to be 60, 70, 80 years old, and you look back and you can't do things the way you used to. Well, I'll get there sooner or later, but just the joy of looking back and looking at the faces, remembering the people. Remember the time that God put somebody in your life that you worked with, helped them through, disciplined them, brought them through, gave them what they needed, and by the time you get to the end of your life, there's hundreds of them. You know what? There's thousands of them because the ones you invested in are now invested in somebody else, and off it goes, and boy, wait till the Judgment Seat of Christ shows up. The people God has put in your life. The people that God, the aristocracy of heaven, the architect of the universe looked down and saw this person and saw you and saw you having what they needed and then through His hand put you two together because He could trust you with it and He gave you that person. You forget those things.

I say this all the time, and you know I modified a little bit, but if you've been in this church for five years, I'll give you a five-year pass, maybe even a six-year pass, but if you've been in this church five years, why aren't you working with somebody? Why aren't you investing what you have with somebody else? You know what the answer is? You ain't gonna like this, but you know what the answer is? You got nothing to invest. You got no joy. How are you going to tell somebody else how to raise their kids when you can't even get yours to go to church? I told you you wouldn't like it. You see, there are certain things, and I'm telling you young Christians this. There are certain things that if you're going to love God, they're going to have to be in your life, and when you have a working relationship with Him, these seven things will be there.

3.) The older you get, the more tender you should be and become.

More Christ-like. These guys become more Antichrist-like, and they do Christ-like. Helping bring people up. Listen to me. He told what He did for you. Helping bring people up delicately. That's in a tender way. Helping people. Not hurting them. Never focusing on the negative. You know what? I could find something negative about everybody in this room. I really could. In fact, I'm cataloging it right now as I'm looking at you. But you know what? You could find as much negative about me. Now, as your pastor, what good do I do you or how do I help you if I just focus on your negative? If you're saved, then you're now, if you're unsaved, there's no good in you. But if you're saved, the good in you is with Jesus Christ, and you know what any pastor should be able to do, and you know what any leader should do in any church. Any Christian should do. You focus on the good. You can focus on a negative all day, that'll get you nowhere. How do you get past and get somebody past that? You focus on the good in them that you see. You nurture that. You delicately bring that along. You be there for them. You nurture for them. You be sweet to them. You be tender to them, and you bring them along. You know why? By the end of the day, that's what everybody wants. What the world wants. They want to be happy. In the world, they teach you that happiness comes by the happenings. They don't need happiness, they need joy because joy will get you through when happiness fails. That has to come from you. Can't buy that at a drugstore. You can't buy that in a Christian bookstore. You can't get that out of

a book. You get out of this book. And it's got to get in you first. Then you give it to somebody else. Generally caring for people. Doing little special things for them that they don't expect. Taking the time to make them feel as special as they are. And as important as they are. Just letting them know that. Letting them know how that you couldn't do the work that you do here without them. Look at the ones who are investing their lives with people. Not chairs. Not tables. I know all those things have to be done, but sometimes we substitute that for what the real ministry should be. And that's people. And that's because you got nothing to give.

4.) The older you get, the more thankful for all the people and what they've done in your life.

I would never be able to repay in this life or the next 10 lives the people who helped me along the way. The people that picked me up when I fell down. I go all the way back to when my father passed away and my mom got married and moved out and left me by myself. That was fine. That's just the way life is. But I had nobody, and Mel and Jean Sobaka adopted me and took me in like their own son. I think when I first got right with God and I went out to the Christian camp, all I had was a little telescope, Bob, and I wanted to go out and show them the stars. That's all I had in my hand, and that's all I knew to do, and Mel saw that, and he says, "Yeah." And he put me with two guys, Chuck and Jeff Schuster, who were brothers. Those two guys, I can never repay them because in those early days, they guided me through my issues. Chuck Schuster was an intelligent and incredibly intelligent guy, and he was always there, and he knew his Bible, and he would help me understand things. A little bit later on, when I got a little bit older, it was guys like Glenn Mays. Glenn Mays was a deacon in our church that was a good guy. He had a burden for Jehovah Witnesses, and he'd go out every Tuesday night, and he'd take me with him, teaching me all about how to deal with Jehovah Witnesses. We talk about Herb Kootz, Dr. Ruckman, Jim Lake. Jim Lake was way along ahead of me when I first got right with God. He'd just come back from Ruckman School, and we got to be best buddies, and I can't tell you how he helped me. It was the investment that they made in my life that got me where I'm at today, and I want to tell you something, whether you forgot it or not, you're only here today dialed into the Word of God because somebody invested in you.

Truman Dollar, I worked for Truman Dollar for a number of years, and I learned a lot from him, and he would say a lot of things that I would write down and remember, and he said one time, he says, "Bob," we were talking about something, and he said, "Bob," he says, "people never remember what you did for them yesterday. All they want to know is what you're going to do for me today." That is so true, and all the people that God has put in our lives to get us where we're at today, and we take those things for granted.

5.) The older you get, the more you want to give back to God because you realize that everything belongs to Him anyhow.

After 69 years of my own life of Him giving to me, all I want to do is to give back to Him for the time that I got left. It takes some time to come to that truth. Older guys get and women get in Christianity, it's not that you because you're older you do less, it's older you do more, you just do it differently. That's the old saying, you work smarter, not harder. You take a guy that's been in the Word of God for 30, 40, 50 years, if he's done what he's supposed to do with it. Do you know how invaluable he is to the younger men and women and guys and women too? Do you know

how invaluable they are? Your value is not can you hit a softball over the fence. Your value is what God has done in your life and what you know and what you can give now in the leading years of your life. Every single thing we have come to us from a loving Father to His Son for His honor and glory, not ours.

6.) The older we get, the more content we should be because of who we are and what we have. But godliness with contentment is great gain.

God's people are not only miserable today, they're not satisfied. They're not satisfied with who they are. They're not satisfied with what they have, and they forget the fact that what they do have, they ought to be satisfied because God gave it to them. O'Mel used to say, "Yeah, I know the grass is greener on the other side, but where do you see the water bill?" That is so true. The older you get, the less in a hurry you get. The less impatient you become, the more you've learned through many times bitter experience and bitter tears to wait on God. Wait to see what He's going to do.

7.) The older we get, the more real heaven should become to us.

The old song says, "The things of earth grow strangely dim in the light of His glorious word." The older you get, the more you see and you learn about life. You learn about how life, how short life really is. You understand James where it says,

*James 4:14*

*Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*

You understand how fragile it is. You begin to understand how you really do fit into God's plan and what He wants to do with Him. At 60 and 70, you understand some things that at 20 and 30 you couldn't get yet, and your priorities change. You look at everything differently. You'll read Psalms 90, and I don't care what the doctors say, and I don't care what anybody says, the Bible says in Psalms 90:10,

*Psalms 90:10*

*The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.*

70 years is what we're promised. If something doesn't intervene some other way. You get after that is grace, and the older you get, the more you begin to separate the bad investment from the good ones, and you more you see your priorities change, you realize that as the world would teach you that all the glitters out there, kids, is not gold. When you head down that final course of your life, and you know the Bible talks about the four cycles of life. Many of you, most of you are in your springtime of your life, and that's a great time to be, birthday today, 10 years old, 22 years old, all these young kids here, all you young couples, you're in the springtime of your life, but you're going to grow into the summertime, and it won't stop there, you're going to go from the summertime that you're going to come into the fall part of your life, and then you're going to get to the winter part of your life, and it's going to come to the place where life comes full circle,

and just as you came into this world in the summertime, you leave in this world in the wintertime.

I'm telling you, you head down that final course of your life, you better understand you're running the race and what God has for you to do. Habakkuk 2:2 says that when a man saw the vision, he ran with it. You know, and I know the older you get, the more you see things the way they really are, and you get a handle on it, and you realize that there's things that you can't do anymore that you used to do, but then if you've done your job, then you've got a bunch of other people that can do it for you with you and do what you can't do anymore. But I know now in my life as a young man, I was running for Him for almost 50 years of my life. I never stopped. I never took a real vacation. I never did anything. I just put my nose to the grindstone, and for almost 50 years, I ran with everything that I had for Him. Now at this point in my life, I'm not nearly running as much for Him as I am and understand now I'm running to Him because that's the way life goes.

*2 John 1:8*

*Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.*

I want to tell you a life full of joy through a relationship and fellowship with Him, a life full of joy will produce a full reward. After a life of having a relationship through the fullness of Him, verse 24 says there's coming a day when God will honor the humble in spirit, the judgment seat of Christ. Right now you get the choice of a spirit of pride or a spirit of humbleness taking all we've learned in our life of what 30, 40, 50 years in some cases, and now helping others get what God has given us, but now we won't because we're so selfish. So many of God's people, and I've seen it all my life in every church and every aspect of Christianity, they get to that point in their life, and because they have looked back and went back a long time ago, they simply at the greatest time in their life when they have something to give, they do not have anything to give.

## V. The Alex Smith Principle

Tonight's the Super Bowl. I don't really care who wins. Obviously, I want Kansas City to because the city deserves it, the Hunts deserve it. I think the team has worked hard, and they deserve it, but at the end of the day, it's just a game. I watched this week an interview with Patrick Mahomes, and the interviewer said, "Patrick, at 24 years of age, you are without a doubt the number one quarterback in football, and what do you look back in your life and what do you attribute that success that got you where you're at today?" You know what he said? He says, "I'm here today because of Alex Smith." Alex Smith was the quarterback that was there for the Chiefs when Patrick came on as a rookie. He says, "Alex took me under his wing and taught me. He showed me the game from his experience."

When I heard that, I'm sorry, I just couldn't help but it overwhelmed me. Alex Smith was a good quarterback, but he was never a Patrick Mahomes on his best day. He knew that Patrick Mahomes, when they drafted him, he knew that Patrick was going to take his place. He knew that there was going to come either this year or next year when he would be cut from the team

and Patrick would become the quarterback for the Chiefs. He knew that. He understood that. You know what? He could have sandbagged him. He could have told him all the wrong stuff. He could have just ignored him and done nothing and let him get his head knocked off and let him find the hard way. He could have gave him bad advice that would have held him back. He could have got an attitude of this young kid is going to take my place, so I'll show him and I'll tell him and give him nothing. But he didn't. He brought him along with what he had learned in all his years in playing football.

Here's a guy, listen to me, here's a guy who never went to the Super Bowl, but he helped his replacement get there today. He took the younger guy who would replace him to make him better to carry on after him. I thought if in Christianity across the board, if the older men in the church who have been around 20, 30, 40 years, who really know their Bible or supposed to, would just do that with the younger. Here is probably in Alex Smith's case, and I don't know, and this is not a judgment, probably an unsaved man who had enough character about him that he cared more about the team going on after he left and seeing the replacement that was in his world that was going to take his job. Yet he dedicated himself of making that kid what he is today by giving him the experience that he had learned in all the years, what a difference it made and what a difference it would make for Christianity. If the older men in this church, if you would just see the value of yourself and you'd see that what you have is irreplaceable and look at getting involved and taking these younger guys and these older women, taking these young gals and helping them develop with them, spend time with them, bring them along knowing that someday they are going to replace you. But oh no, no, we got to hold on to our power. We got to be the minister of information. We got to be the deacon of the chairs and the tables. We got to fight over, "Don't you move my coffee mug." What a difference it would make. But they won't, cross Christianity won't because by the time you get to that point in your life, honestly, and here it is, I told you it was not going to be pretty today, here it is. You know why? Because you got nothing to give. Your life has went so long without joy. Your life has went so long without a fellowship and relationship and really time in the Bible and studying the Bible and laying out the Bible that you know what? What are you going to give them? What are you going to do?

The ministry is people. End of the story, folks. The ministry is people. What Christianity needs today is more Alex Smith and less of us. We need older men and women who have learned and come up through some things and went through some things and struggled through some things and had to learn some things, yes, the hard way and maybe fell down many times. But the fact that you got back up and you're here now today is invaluable to all these young kids. The ministry is people.

Yet today, tonight, and I'm all excited about it, I'm good. I can't wait to get back here. We're all going to get back here and have a Super Bowl and watch the thing and everything. But I must tell you that if they win tonight, it will be because a lot of it will have to do with what Alex Smith did with Patrick. If they win tonight, that will be great. This city will be on its head for the next week. When they hold that Super Bowl trophy up and everybody gets to pass it around and hold it, I want you not to forget, as the Bible says, they ran a hard race to get to the Super Bowl, but it's a corruptible crown. You guys are all excited about a Super Bowl tonight. I want to tell you

something. Every Sunday, every day, every day of your life as a child of God, you're in the Super Bowl. It's how you run it.

*1 Corinthians 9:24-27*

*24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.*

*25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.*

*26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:*

*27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*

There it is right there. No relationship, no fellowship, no joy, you're a castaway. You're great at setting up chairs, you're great at taking out the trash, you're great at doing this and doing that, but at the end of the day, the ministry is people.

I'll leave you with this. When you got saved, you laid a foundation in your life, and that foundation, you're Jesus Christ. The rest of your life, you were told to be a wise master builder and to build on that foundation gold, silver, and precious stones. I've already laid it out. You take what you build, and through that, you build a relationship of knowing Him, knowing what He did for you and the other people, the precious stones that God puts in your life, and at some point, you'll see God's vision and get God's burden. When you do, you'll build a relationship with Him by walking in the light that He will fill you so full of joy that nothing negative in this world will ever, ever, ever take it from you. You'll look back as the older you get, and you'll learn some things, you'll see some things differently, you'll change some things about yourself differently, but you'll come with the greatest truth I can ever give to you, that salvation, the Christian life, will never, never, and I'm telling you, will never be easy. But every day it should get better. If you can focus on that, that's what a relationship with Christ is all about. That the older you get, the better you get. The older you get, the more Christ-like you get. The older you get, the sweeter you get, the tenderer you get, the more like Christ that you see and understand now because what you've been through, what these young kids out here need because you never forget what somebody did for you, you're willing to do for them.

In a lot of ways, you all got Patrick Mahomes jerseys on today, and I love it. Some of you got different ones, but you got who you got. In reality, everybody ought to have an Alex Smith jersey today because he's the one who paid the price. Never got there himself, but he gave this kid a chance because he saw in him what he didn't have himself, and he never got an attitude about it.